



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contacts:

Marcela Salazar | msalazar@skdknick.com | 202-567-1163

Bridget Bartol | bbartol@skdknick.com | 954-594-0689

GROCERY EMPLOYERS MUST HELP “SPREAD THANKS, NOT COVID” TO ESSENTIAL WORKERS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

During the Year’s Busiest Grocery Shopping Week, UFCW Local 7, Representing Over 17,000 Essential Grocery Workers, Calls on Employers to Reinstate Stringent Safety Protocols & Hazard Pay

DENVER – The U.S. is entering the holiday season with record-breaking daily COVID-19 case numbers, putting frontline grocery workers, their families, and shoppers at risk. UFCW Local 7 President Kim Cordova, who represents more than 17,000 essential grocery workers in Colorado and Wyoming, urges employers to reinstate stringent safety protocols and hazard pay of \$2 an hour, as grocery demand skyrockets ahead of Thanksgiving. UFCW Local 7 also calls on customers to do their part by following CDC and store safety protocols, wearing a mask, and social distancing while grocery shopping.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, and as of 11 am MT today (Wednesday), 472 UFCW Local 7 grocery members have contracted COVID-19, and [three Kroger members have died](#). While the hazard of the coronavirus pandemic has not ended, and in fact gotten worse, Kroger and Safeway/Albertsons both [ended Hazard Pay on May 17th](#) for its essential workers. Since that date and as of 11 am MT today (Wednesday), UFCW Local 7 has seen a 421% increase in COVID-19 cases of our members at Kroger, a 973% increase for Safeway/Albertsons, and a total increase of 529% of COVID cases from our membership at these two grocery retailers in Colorado and Wyoming. The number of cases has exploded since late October and increases by the hour, with the vast majority in Colorado.

Kim Cordova, Vice President of UFCW International and President of UFCW Local 7, which represents more than 17,000 grocery workers in Colorado and Wyoming, and over 22,000 essential workers, issued the following statement:

“This holiday season, Local 7 encourages grocery employers and customers to spread thanks to essential workers, not COVID. During these difficult times the greatest gift we can all get this Thanksgiving is the gift of health, and it is time for the grocery companies to do their part. Even when our communities are shut down, Local 7’s grocery members continue to work and put themselves and their families at risk to keep stores running. Without their continued hard work and sacrifice, communities would not be able to feed their families or have access to other essential services at grocery stores, like pharmacies and banking, during this pandemic.

“Given the rate of viral spread, it is obvious that grocery retail employers have grown lax in following and enforcing CDC guidelines, including amongst customers. While grocer’s profits continue to expand exponentially as more Americans cook at home, so do the risks their workers face every day as a result of the virus.

“We ask these two companies to thank their essential employees by reinstating Hazard Pay and increasing the frequency of critical cleaning and safety procedures to protect workers and customers, such as limiting the number of shoppers in stores simultaneously, mandatory cart and basket cleaning, mandatory masks, more frequent bathroom, breakroom and cash register cleanings, more prominent signage for customers on safety rules, and having management ask unmasked customers to put on a mask. We also encourage all customers to wear a mask, which shows a sign of respect to the sacrifice of essential workers in their communities, and will also literally save lives.”

This week, UFCW Local 7 members and all grocery shoppers are encouraged to share the #SpreadThanksNotCOVID and post a picture of themselves in a mask while shopping on social media to remind people to help stop the spread of coronavirus and encourage employers like Kroger and Safeway/Albertsons to reinstate hazard pay for grocery workers.

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[Local 7](#), the largest Union in Colorado is affiliated with United Food and Commercial Workers International Union which represents over 1.3 million workers in the United States and Canada, and is one of the largest private sector Unions in North America. UFCW members work in a wide range of industries, including retail food, food processing, agriculture, retail sales, and health care.

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